

NSC BRIEFING ~~SECRET~~ 29 July 1954

UNREST IN FRENCH NORTH AFRICA

I. Ferment continues in French protectorates
Morocco, Tunisia.

A. Morocco worst hot-spot until spring '54,
but situation there (under new Resident
General Lacoste) now quieter.

B. In contrast, Tunisia situation now
worsened by upsurge terrorism.

II. Past trouble in Morocco has included killings,
boycotts, destruction crops. New element
nationalist negotiation, maneuver this week -
open letter to Lacoste from hundred Moroccan
notables:

A. Urges reinstitution civil liberties,
frank discussion current problems.

B. This letter, plus similar plea by 75
French residents, could become basis
negotiations by "moderates."

C. In any case, 45,000 French troops in
Morocco can probably maintain status quo.

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III, Meanwhile, French delaying action Morocco until Tunisian problem settled. There, despite strict security measures, military reinforcements, terrorism continues.

A. After Tunisian cabinet resigned en masse 5 July, Bey appointed French-led group, thereby triggering flareup violence.

B. Latest (24 July) fatality (95th since mid-March) was French commandant Bey's guard (shot in back).

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IV. Terrorism Tunisia stems from three sources:

A. First is Fellagha (traditionally bandits, variously estimated from 1 to 10 thousand--based desolate interior hills, exist by raids). Fellagha now said include nationalists, deserters.

1. Big upsurge incident May 1954, when bands moved northward.

2. Fairly well-equipped--possibly by nationalists.

3. Now believed returning hills, result heavy French pressure.

B. Second type terrorism is sporadic killing (as case commandant) and sabotage.

1. Due more anti-French feeling than pro-nationalist or Communist sympathies.

2. Difficult control military means alone.

C. Third is counter-terrorism by French settlers.

1. Example: settlers killed five natives 11 July.

2. Connivance of authorities hinders control.

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V. In short term, present French measures Tunisia should help. Using curfews, search, military trials. Have 10,000 new troops, for total 26 thousand.

A. Long term restoration order, however, dependent Paris policy.

B. Government action expected 31 July, based following:

1. Tunisians to administer internal affairs.

2. France to retain control foreign affairs, defense, finance.

3. Rights, status French in Tunisia to be assured.

C. Nationalist leaders may accept such

1. settlement, if means genuine self-government.

2. Settlers, however, will oppose all concessions.

1. Will pressure Paris, even take direct action.

2. Appearance small moderate settler group, however, one new, hopeful

factor.

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